

Bulbinella rossii

COMMON NAME

Ross's lily

SYNONYMS

Chrysobactron rossii Hook.f.; Anthericum rossii (Hook.f.) Hook.f.

FAMILY

Asphodelaceae

AUTHORITY

Bulbinella rossii (Hook.f.) Cheeseman

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Monocots

NVS CODE

BULROS

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 14

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. New Zealand: Auckland Islands and Campbell Island/Motu Ihupuku.

HABITAT

Widespread and common from sea level to the tops of island ranges. Flourishes in disturbed sites, and so common near old habitations and because it is not especially palatable, where browsing animals congregate. prefers open herbfield and tussock grassland, where it may form dense colonies.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

FACW: Facultative Wetland

Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands (non-wetlands).



Sub Antarctic Islands. Photographer: Chris Rance, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Campbell Island. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Dioecious, stout, perennial lily up to 1 m tall and 40 mm diameter at the base. **Leaves** fleshy, 0.6–1m x 15–60 mm wide, dark green, obtuse to subacute, apices recurved, nerves faint to prominent, easily felt when fresh. **Peduncle** up to 10 mm diameter, usually < leaf length. **Inflorescence** a cylindric raceme up to 150 × 600 mm; bracts and pedicels of almost equal length in female flowers and conspicuous in bud; in males < pedicels and inconspicuous in bud; pedicels 10–20 mm long, swollen just below flower. **Flowers** numerous, densely crowded, 10–14 mm diameter, golden yellow to sulphur yellow, often faintly tinged with orange; tepals oblong-ovate, spreading in males in females erect and remaining so, usually hardening as fruit ripens. **Stamens** < tepals; anthers in males conspicuously filled with pollen, in females rudimentary. **Ovary** 2 mm long, broad right to base. **Capsule** 10 mm long, broadly ovoid, gynophore absent. **Seeds** 4–6 mm long, dark brown to black, narrowly winged.

SIMILAR TAXA

None. This is the only species of *Bulbinella* Kunth present on the subantarctic islands. *Bulbinella rossii* is perhaps closest to *B. gibbsii* Cockayne, from which it differs by its greater stature, leaves up to 60 mm wide, cylindric rather than conical racemes held on a stout rather than slender axis which is obscured by the densely crowded flowers and fruits rather than more or less visible. *Bulbinella rossii* has a distinctly capitate rather than scarcely capitate stigma.

FLOWERING

October–January

FLOWER COLOURS

Yellow

FRUITING

December–March

LIFE CYCLE

Winged seeds are dispersed by wind (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Difficult—should not be removed from the wild. It has been cultivated with limited success in the more southerly parts of New Zealand.

THREATS

No apparent threats. Listed because it occupies a small geographic area.

ETYMOLOGY

bulbinella: Little bulb

rossii: Named for William Ross, a botanical collector; or Capt. James Ross, leader of an arctic expedition; or others named Ross, depending on genus

ATTRIBUTION

Description modified by Peter de Lange from Moore and Edgar (1970)

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Moore LB, Edgar E. 1970. Flora of New Zealand, Volume II. Indigenous Tracheophyta: Monocotyledones except Gramineae. Government Printer, Wellington, NZ. 354 p.

Thorsen MJ, Dickinson KJM, Seddon PJ. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285–309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ppees.2009.06.001>.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/bulbinella-rossii/>